E
435
.W92

☞ Read and hand to your Neighbor.

WORDS OF COUNSEL

TO

MEN OF BUSINESS.

BY A MAN OF BUSINESS.

E435
.N92

WORDS OF COUNSEL.

THE object of this little tract—simply and intelligibly written—is to show reflecting men, and especially citizens of Pennsylvania and the North, why they should vote for Mr. Buchanan as President of the United States. It is addressed to men of business and practical industry. It is written by a man of business, who understands the work he has had to do in life better than politics; and who was born and bred and has earned his living, and whatever success he has had, here in Pennsylvania. Nor is it at all material—and so end these words of preface—whether the writer is a merchant or mechanic of Philadelphia, a farmer of Lancaster or Berks, a collier from Schuylkill, or Luzerne, or Lehigh, an iron-master from Centre or Columbia, or a manufacturer from Pittsburg—if the reader will realize the actual truth that he *is* a man of work, mental and bodily. Among all trades and occupations, especially here in Pennsylvania, penetrated in every nook and corner by the nerves of internal commerce, and more dependent than any other State on domestic tranquillity, there is the closest sympathy and communion. The question of the next Presidency is a question of practical interest to all, and so it ought to be regarded.

THE TRUE QUESTION.

Let us see how it presents itself, under what aspect of novelty, and with what portents for the future—not the remote future which is to dawn upon our children, but the immediate future in which we living, working-men are interested. It may be well to look at this question without reference to individuals. Let us then so consider it—and let him who reads meditate on each proposition that is stated, and if he questions any matter of fact, let him scrutinize it for himself. This is no appeal to passion or to prejudice, but an honest effort to convince.

It is now, or will be next September, sixty-nine years since the Constitution of the United States was formed. They have been years of tranquillity and prosperous progress. With brief spasms of war, lasting in the aggregate but some half dozen years out of the sixty-nine—and of occasional commercial distress, trade and industry, except when experiments with the currency have interfered with them, have wonderfully prospered, but never have they more prospered than within the last ten years. Yet during this long period of steady progress, there have been periodical political contests and changes, marked with ordinary party acrimony. One side has succeeded to-day—and another succeeded to-morrow, and yet national prosperity, social and economical, has not been disturbed. In truth, the revolutions in national politics, especially those which have occurred since 1836, have seemed to exercise a salutary influence by the very change of administrative routine which they involved. Questions of politics ran through the whole Union. The Southern Democrat or the Southern Whig had close sympathy with his Northern or Eastern or Western brother. The four Presidents of the last sixteen years were sometimes Northern and sometimes Southern men, but whatever they were, there was nothing in the victory their party gained, to force on them the necessity of proscribing, in their administrative arrangements, the public men of any portion of the country. All was harmonious, and the government, with apparent rather than real change of policy, continued to protect and sustain the great interests of the whole country. That which was the great element of success with government, and contentment with the people, was the absence of sectional party spirit. Throughout the last half century there has been not only a political union in form, but a sympathy that transcended and overcame all territorial divisions—and it is not in the capacity of language to describe how conducive this has been to the business interests of the country. Every now and then, a spirit of sectionalism broke out, as a pestilence is apt to do, in a certain spot, but it raged with violence only round that spot, and the rest of the Union put it in strict quarantine and kept it out. In 1844, "sectionalism," or to use a more familiar term, "abolitionism" (or under its new name "republicanism"), prevented the election of Mr. Clay, determining by the Birney votes, that of the State of New York. In 1848, sectionalism in a new guise reappeared in certain localities as before, and took the same vote from General Cass. But then, and till now, sectionalism was what the doctors call sporadic: very bad in certain places, but easily managed and controlled elsewhere. How is it going to be now? This is the question for men of business, for national men, for patriots, for lovers of the Constitution—without whose protection business

interests cannot exist—to ponder over well. The Union has been before now supposed to be in danger, and anxious and nervous, and in some instances, judicious men have become alarmed about its permanence. This was the case in 1819, in the agitation of the Missouri Question, when the real point at issue before the people was evaded, and the palliative was resorted to of a territorial prohibition for posterity, to postpone the evil day. It was the case again in 1832, when General Jackson's resolute patriotism (and how thoroughly and gallantly the whole nation sustained him!) repressed Nullification in a single Southern State, and a compromise postponing tariff pregnant of future trouble was the remedy. And again was there anxiety and alarm in 1850, when local irritation in the form of Wilmot provisoes, and Prigg decisions, and evasions and resistance of fugitive slave laws in the North—and jealous irritability and perhaps disappointment in the South, led to apparent conflict and disturbance, and to the compromise measures of 1850. The almost dying words of a Whig President, in the only message he sent to Congress, yet linger in the heart of this nation—for, Southern man as he was, he loved the Union with a simple faith and loyalty that shames the treasonable denunciations of fanaticism.

"For more than half a century," said General Taylor in his message to the 31st Congress, "during which kingdoms and empires have fallen, this Union has stood unshaken. The patriots who formed it have long since descended to the grave; yet still it remains the proudest monument to their memory, and the object of affection and admiration with every one worthy to bear the American name. In my judgment, its dissolution would be the greatest of calamities, and to avert that should be the study of every American. Upon its preservation must depend our own happiness and that of countless generations to come."

But all these were superficial irritations and transient alarms, for through them all, in the darkest and most threatening hours, there was nothing like sectional politics. There were Southern and Northern Whigs, and Southern and Northern Democrats—and fanatics and sectionalists stood aloof, in little knots by themselves. No Abolitionist, as such, ventured to raise his voice or show his face in a Democratic or a Whig meeting or Convention. If abolitionism, or sectionalism, or intrusive fanaticism, had opened its lips in the whig city of Philadelphia, the merchants, and manufacturers, aside from all patriotic sentiment, feeling how deeply their business interests were involved in the peace of the Union, would have sternly rebuked it—if in the Democratic counties of Berks, or Schuylkill, or Westmoreland or Centre, the voice of treason or even disaffection to the Union had been heard, the result would have been the same.

But now, in this year 1856, for the first time in the history of

the nation, the politics of the country have, by the acts of one party alone, become intensely sectional. Every calculation of chance which fanaticism makes is founded on sectionalism. One candidate, and he the candidate, not of the patriotic, but of the fanatic North, expects to get none but Northern votes, and thus to gain a sectional triumph.

Let us see how this has come about, and what it must end in. The answer is to be found in the action of two political conventions, one of which met at Cincinnati, and nominated James Buchanan, and the other of which met at Philadelphia, two weeks later, and nominated John C. Fremont. It must be borne in mind that in this relation we are not speaking of individuals, or of candidates, except as representatives.

In the Cincinnati Convention, every State of the Union, North, South, East, and West, was fully represented, and the choice was a Northern man. In the Philadelphia Convention no Southern State had an actual representation. Virginia had a few straggling representatives, but they felt themselves degraded, and were silent. It was, in its component parts, sectional from first to last.

But what spirit directed its action and controlled its choice? In what spirit was it convoked?

On the 16th of May, 1856, thus spoke a Senator from Massachusetts in his place in the Senate.

"The slave power with its loathsome folds is now coiled over the whole land." "It shall be swept into the charnel-house of defunct tyrannies." "Hirelings picked from the drunken spew and vomit of an uneasy civilization—in the form of men—leagued together by secret signs and lodges, have renewed the incredible atrocities of the Assassins and of the Thugs; showing the blind submission of the Assassins to the Old Man of the Mountain, in robbing Christians on the road to Jerusalem, and showing the heartlessness of the Thugs, who, avowing that murder was their religion, waylaid travellers on the great road from Agra to Delhi; with the more deadly bowie-knife for the dagger of the Assassin, and the more deadly revolver for the noose of the Thug."

So spoke one Massachusetts man in an atmosphere already heated and explosive.

Mark, American reader—mark, you who love the Union, and feel how much the Union does for you and yours—the words of another Massachusetts man—one who was found worthy to be Daniel Webster's first successor in the Senate. On the 2d of June, but a few days before the Philadelphia Convention met, Robert C. Winthrop wrote these words of wise and gentle counsel:

"I have no hope that violent speeches, angry resolutions, or inflammatory appeals will do anything towards accomplishing a

good result. It is no time for indulging in sweeping denunciations, indiscriminate and insulting reproaches, towards other sections of the Union. On the contrary, beyond almost all other periods of our history, since we had a history as a united nation, unless we are willing to see that history brought to a bloody close and the volume closed forever, it is the time for the calmest, wisest, most collected words of which any man is capable."

To these words of gentle wisdom, while "licentious grossness of language and personal violence" were desecrating the Capitol and preparing for the outburst of fanaticism at Philadelphia, there came an answer from Virginia, from one of the most distinguished and most tolerant and conservative of her statesmen, living in retirement within sight of Jefferson's grave.

"We have been," writes William C. Rives, of Virginia, "of late rapidly and fearfully drifting into that geographical antagonism of parties, which all good and wise men have so earnestly deprecated; and in which, when it shall have been consummated, what, Mr. Madison impressively asks, is to 'control those great repulsive masses from awful shocks against each other?' Passing events have given a solemnity to this prophetic warning, which it is no longer possible to disregard, and which calls upon patriotic and reflecting men everywhere to unite in a strenuous and determined effort to exclude from the arena of national politics a question so fruitful of sectional strife."

At the same time, as if in further warning, Millard Fillmore wrote from the Old World to his friends here, that he was returning home, "if possible to aid in quieting that alarming sectional agitation which, while it delights the monarchists of Europe, causes every true friend of our own country to mourn."

Thus stimulated on the one hand and warned on the other—in the city where the Constitution was framed, and where were uttered Washington's farewell words of warning against "Geographical Parties," a Convention met, and named a sectional candidate for President of the United States, and urged his election on sectional grounds. This, no human being doubts. No longer were abolitionists localized. They—the most violent and fanatical of the name—were the leaders of the Convention. The orators were Giddings and Wilmot and Elder and Lovejoy—the slanderers of Clay and Webster, the defiers of the Constitution, the exhorters of resistance to statutes of the United States.—When the name of John M'Lean, of Ohio, was suggested and urged, the memory that as a Federal Judge, sworn to support the Constitution of the United States, he had sustained and enforced the Fugitive Slave Law, rose up, and he was rejected, almost in scorn, as unsuited to sectional purposes.

One speaker (J. Watson Webb) said, embodying in his words the worst spirit of violence, "If we fail at the election, we must

drive back the slaveocracy with fire and sword;" and another (O. J. Lovejoy) used plainer language still, and he was cheered and applauded. These are the significant words:

"The American people have a mission to carry out—this mission was understood in the days of the Pilgrim fathers, and in the days of Jefferson. It was not to chase negroes—it was indicated in the Declaration of Independence. The question now to be decided is, whether we will fulfil our mission. *I proclaim myself an Abolitionist—I think the party has that disease, and, before the campaign is through, it will break out all over.*"

Now, with these words fresh in recollection, authenticated and acknowledged, will any reflecting man, North or South, hesitate in believing that the issue thus presented to the people is a sectional one, and that the worst prophecy of evil as to geographical parties has at length been realized? To vote for candidates thus named and thus sustained is to endorse the principles of disunion enunciated. And, supposing for a moment that such candidates could be elected, and an Executive Administration inaugurated on a narrow sectional basis, what four years of strife, and bickering, and domestic turmoil would ensue—and in such strife and turmoil that which would be soonest sacrificed is the great business interests of the Nation. All past distraction would be as nothing compared with this.

Let any man of practical and successful industry realize, if he can, the dreary waste which civil strife produces. There have been imaginings heretofore. The inauguration of sectionalism would work awful realities. They need no rhetoric to paint them.

It is a fearful truth, that there is greater danger at this moment to the Union than ever in the history of the country. It is more alarming because the feeling, which this sectional nomination creates, is silent and suppressed.

There is no railing, there is no violence—but the conviction forced on the mind of the South, that the North, or any portion of the North, excludes them, and as it were marks them off, sinks deep into the heart.

The election of an Abolition President breaks the Union into pieces, and Pennsylvania becomes a frontier, with the ragged edges of a frontier, with questions of boundary, of runaways, of aggression and resistance, of trouble of every kind; and Philadelphia and Pittsburg, neither of them fifty miles from the dividing line, not as they now are, great circulators of trade and manufactures through the South and West, reduced to doubtful frontier towns, with markets dependent on foreign and uncertain legislation.

The difficulty is to make people believe all this possible. We have been so long used to peace and domestic concord that we

can hardly imagine a disruption of the actual ties of political union.

Yet, to repeat again Mr. Madison's question, in such a state of things as now exists, with the fearful antagonism of geographical parties—"what is to control these great repulsive masses of North and South from awful shocks against each other"—and when was this antagonism more likely to produce these results than now? In order to make a practical application of this, let us contemplate an inevitable practical effect. Mr. Fremont is elected on the principles enunciated by Mr. Giddings and the Philadelphia Convention—the principles of ultra, offensive Abolition—the disease, which it is foretold, is to break out throughout the party, before the victory is won—how is he to carry on the Government? His cabinet must be formed of men bred in the school, and faithful to the principles he espouses. To suppose that, if elected by such men, he would repudiate and abandon them, is to impute personal dishonor. He goes into office bound hand and foot by express promises and close sympathy with men who do not scruple to avow they recognize, as citizens, a higher law than the Constitution, and are willing, in contingencies which are carelessly regarded as probable to let "the Union slide."

Now, it is a matter of no conjecture, but of absolute assurance, that a government thus inaugurated cannot be peacefully or contentedly administered. There will be no repose. There will be no harmony of local interests. There will be aggression, and there must be resistance. Four years of such disturbance is a long period in the lives of us all. Its convulsions and excitements leave traces behind them on the business interests of the people that cannot soon be obliterated. He is at this moment the avowed candidate of the party and of the individual men (their names are on the record of the Republican Convention), whom, in 1838, Henry Clay thus described and thus denounced:

"With them the rights of property are nothing; the deficiency of the powers of the General Government is nothing; the acknowledged and incontestable powers of the States are nothing; civil war, a dissolution of the Union, and the overthrow of a government, in which are concentrated the fondest hopes of the civilized world, are nothing; a single idea has taken possession of their minds, and onward they pursue it, overlooking all barriers, reckless and regardless of all consequences. Their purpose is abolition, universal abolition, peaceably, if it can, forcibly, if it must. One means and a most lamentable one, to which they resort, is that which this class of men is endeavoring to employ, of arraying one portion against another portion of the Union. They try to excite the imaginations and stimulate the rage of the people of the Free States against the people of the Slave States. They

infuse a spirit of detestation and hatred against one entire section of the Union."

Let it be understood that it is under this influence that the Republican Candidate is nominated, will be supported, and, if elected, will administer, or try to administer, the Government. Who can doubt the mischievous result?

JAMES BUCHANAN NO SECTIONALIST.

Turning from this scene of violence, and sectionalism, and certain discord, we invite the working and business man to note the contrast. Let him observe the words of peaceful and conservative wisdom with which JAMES BUCHANAN speaks of this hateful subject of slavery and sectional discord. They are earnest. They are emphatic. They are precise. They reflect the deliberate intent with which he approaches the discharge of the great duty upon him—that of a National President of the United States.

"The agitation on the question of Domestic Slavery," says Mr. Buchanan, "has too long distracted and divided the people of this Union, and alienated their affections from each other.

"Most happy will it be for the country, if this long agitation were at an end. During its whole progress it has produced no practical good to any human being, whilst it has been the source of great and dangerous evils. It has alienated and estranged one portion of the Union from the other, and has even seriously threatened its very existence. To my own personal knowledge, it has produced the impression among foreign nations, that our great and glorious confederacy is in constant danger of dissolution. This does us serious injury, because acknowledged power and stability always command respect among nations, and are among the best securities against unjust aggression and in favor of the maintainance of honorable peace."

Now, in these few words of plain and direct truth, is the promise which this nomination gives to the industry of the nation, that they shall have, on this exciting topic, at least during Mr. Buchanan's Administration,—what industry most needs,—what the merchant and farmer, the mechanic and manufacturer, most require—stability, steadiness, repose. What a blessing beyond calculation it will be, to have an administration for four years, during which, by the mere force of personal example, no word of acrimony shall be uttered on the subject of Domestic Slavery, and the nation's evil passions may be at rest!

So much for the claims and merits of each party on the one absorbing question of Sectionalism and Nationalism. It will be well now to inquire,—keeping steadily in view the business, prac-

tical interests of the nation—what else the administration of a public man like James Buchanan promises to the people.

HIS PRIVATE CHARACTER.

Let us, in no spirit of adulation (for the day for idolizing great men has happily passed by), look back on his career, as illustrated in forty years' history of his country, and see what assurance it gives.

Chief of all his claims on public confidence (and let no technical politician depreciate the praise) is his gentle temper, and the unblemished purity of his private life. Of that high honor, not even ungenerous adversaries can deprive him; and if the attempt were made, there would arise from the neighborhood where his whole life has been spent, a voice of indignant, hearty vindication. The life of a public man has its private trials and temptations. There beset the path of an American Statesman, extending in this instance from youth to age, not a few perils to which the private character of many a one has been sacrificed. It is only he who, guarded and protected by kind and gentle influence generated in his own heart, walks steadily that walks securely. More than two thousand years ago an orator of freedom wisely said that it was impossible for a man whose private character was bad to be a faithful leader of his country; or that private depravity could consist with public virtue; or that he could be the Nation's friend, who was, in truth, the friend of no man there—that he could be strenuous in his country's cause, who slighted the charities

> "For whose dear sake
> That country, if at all, must be beloved!"

It is the truth yet—and the private character of the Pennsylvania Statesman, thus unstained and spotless, is the highest and strongest of the links that bind him around the hearts of his countrymen.

Nor is this an austere, forbidding virtue, for it is ennobled and harmonized by a gentle, genial temper, and this too will be the testimony of those who know him best, of his Lancaster County neighbors, his friends and associates of fifty years—and of those public men who through all the vehemence of party strife (and our country has known heated times within the last brief century) have always acknowledged his gentleness, his liberality, his devoted courtesy. And here, too, we may well say, let no rude caviller deride this gentle virtue; it helps to make the career of any public man happier. Mr. Buchanan's words have never stung to resentment. His personal demeanor has never made his friends for a moment blush for passion or indiscretion. There

has been no vehemence, no intemperance in anything he ever uttered.

Ours is the day of vehement passions and heated sectional animosities. It is the day too when the legislation of the country is believed to be threatened with insidious dangers. It is, therefore, the time of all others when there is needed at the head of affairs a Statesman of pure character, unsuspected integrity, and of conciliatory, gentle, but resolute temper.

HIS PUBLIC CAREER.

Now let us, in the same spirit of candor, see what assurance for the future his long public life, chequered by few reverses, gives his countrymen.

That future—our immediate future—at the moment these words are written—is swelling with events of perilous significance. To some affecting internal peace allusion has been made. To others threatening our friendly relations with the world abroad, it is not necessary further to refer than by saying how clearly they admonish us to trust the Executive administration to safe, discreet, and resolute hands. Well might the man of business tremble for his fortune or his credit if there were danger that sectional intolerance and undisciplined enthusiasm so kindred to weakness should at a crisis like this usurp the government.

THE STATE LEGISLATURE.

It is now forty-two years since Mr. Buchanan entered public life. His first step was on the modest platform of the State Legislature, where in Pennsylvania so much talent has been unostentatiously developed, but from which till now, to our shame be it spoken, there has been so little preferment. James Buchanan learned his earliest political lessons in the best school for public men, the Legislature of his native State. He was there during a foreign war, voting steadily to sustain the measures of that war, and enabling Pennsylvania to attain the real honor for which other States are now fiercely contending of contributing (as she did in the Revolution) most men and most money to the public service.

He became a national man in 1821, having that year entered the House of Representatives.

THE MISSOURI QUESTION.

It was a period of lull after a momentous storm; for the Missouri question had just been decided, and the compromise line of arbitrary division adopted. The public mind was relieved from

an impending danger, and all were glad to have repose at any cost.

Mr. Buchanan came into national public life just as this struggle was over—the danger of sectionalism removed—the pretension of Congress to take from a State with a republican constitution the right to regulate for itself its own domestic institutions once and forever repudiated, and that question at last settled.

THE WAR OF THE CURRENCY.

Then came—and Mr. Buchanan was in it from first to last—the great twenty years' warfare about currency and trade. It began as early as General Jackson's first administration, and it ended on the permanent establishment of a revenue tariff and the utter separation of the Government and its resources from banking institutions and their resources, whatever they may claim to be. In all this wild warfare Mr. Buchanan has been steady and consistent, and moreover, has been proved to be in the right. For if at this moment of substantial prosperity, there is one thing on which the public mind of this nation is settled—it is that freedom of commercial intercourse, that a tariff for revenue, and above all restriction, vigilant and suspicious, of all contrivances for expanded credit, are the true secret of sound economical administration. There is not, it may safely be affirmed, a sane man in the country, who desires to see restored a high tariff—a Bank of the United States—or an expansion of paper currency. There is not a farmer, or a collier, or a miner, or a mechanic, from one end of the United States to the other, who is not at this moment content with what he earns, and with the coin in which he is paid for his daily labor. Yet it was for this that during twenty years, for the triumph was slowly won, James Buchanan and the Democratic party labored. Who shall say after watching this struggle, and this great result, that the party of the people is not after all the conservative party of the country.

And who shall say—and this is the moral to which we call the attention of the working business men—that the commercial and industrial interests of the nation are not safer in the guardianship of public men thus trained and thus conservative, than in the hands of any light-headed, inexperienced adventurer, sprung from the diseased soil of commercial speculation. The Pennsylvania statesman who has all his life seen the same results of steady labor operating on the generous but not luxuriant soil of our fertile valleys, or winning by patient industry sure wages from our coal-mountains and iron-mines, is a safer guardian of the great interests, social and economical, of this hard-working

people, than any gold-digger or land operator that ever became rich by luck.

And this training—this discipline in the right school of finance—it is which makes JAMES BUCHANAN the very man for the times, looking at the election in its relations to mere business interests—the interest of the merchant, the farmer, or the manufacturer. For industry, the great blessing is stability and repose.

This review of Mr. Buchanan's life is not meant to be biography. It is but the rapid recapitulation of leading incidents, or rather the retrospect of a long career of public service, which it is believed has tended to form the character of a conservative statesman—a safe man for the times.

National, then, in his views of our conflicting domestic institutions—resolute in his convictions on the great questions of finance and currency, what assurance do his life and character of mind give as to our foreign policy?

FOREIGN POLICY.

The anxious wish of the American people—let mischievous traducers say what they please—is for honorable peace with all the world, and strict neutrality in the conflicts of foreign nations. Never did this wish more strongly move the people than at this very moment. Commerce, and manufactures, and agriculture, and the mechanic arts, never more prosperous than now, need and will exact, a peaceful policy from our rulers. The nomination at Cincinnati was hailed by all thoughtful men at home, and will be so regarded abroad, as the triumph of the principles and policy of peace. It is, however, especially the triumph of the best sort of peaceful influences and sentiment—those which are consistent with jealous maintenance of national honor and national interests. Nothing can more tend to maintain peace with foreign nations—and especially that great nation from whom we inherit so many virtues and some peculiarities—than such concord and united counsels as the Convention at Cincinnati presented, united on all questions of internal policy, and united in the choice of their candidates. What could more stimulate the aggressions of foreign nations, especially those whose commercial interest it may seem to be to divide us, than the prospect that, for four years to come, there are to be domestic bickerings and discordant counsels—the North arrayed against the South, and the South against the North—an accidental and inexperienced Executive, in turmoil with Congress, and looked upon as an enemy worse than a foreign foe by a large portion of the people. The most hostile Englishman or Frenchman that ever railed at our free institutions never breathed

harsher or more envenomed words—amounting to moral treason —than were familiarly uttered and vehemently applauded in the assemblage which lately met in Philadelphia. The peace which they must expect from the world is only the peace which pity might vouchsafe to grant—not the peace which union and strength demand.

In the Democratic Convention there was no word of sectional discord. The spectacle there exhibited was the representation of a united, high-spirited, and yet peace-loving nation. The only word of dissent that was whispered came from Southern lips and they were words (and this the calumniators of the South would do well to remember) of caution and circumspection on the side of peace. For it is a fact worthy to be meditated on even by fanatics, and certainly by Northern men of business, that more than once in the history of our country, have Southern statesmen saved us from the calamities of actual war, or those hardly less annoying inflictions of commercial anxiety whether there will be war or not. The much-reviled South has sometimes saved us from the follies and passions of the North. They are our friends and brothers yet.

And most of all did the nomination, by cordial unanimity, of JAMES BUCHANAN say to the world that the United States desires honorable peace.

"The nomination of Mr. BUCHANAN," writes Fremont's father-in-law, to the citizens of Missouri, "determines my course. I consider him the safest chance for preserving the peace of the country, now greatly endangered both at home and abroad; and believing him to be the best chance for peace, I hold it to be the duty of all to support it."*

The American people so regard it. Mr. BUCHANAN has exactly that experience which fits him for the crisis, whether it be one of peace or war, or the anxious, doubtful, crisis of peace or war, when a rash word or a timid look may precipitate an impending evil. He has been under varied circumstances our representative abroad. First, at the court of that great power of the North of Europe, whence more than once, out of the thick darkness of apparent despotism, have issued gleams of friendly feeling to our American interests and our country; then and lately, and during a period of grave responsibility, at the metropolis of Great Britain, the seat of intelligence and high civilization more formidable in the rivalry of friendly nations than ruder elements of power. To meet and appreciate actual kindness, and yet not to be swayed too much by it—to assert rights with firmness—to repulse the first signs of indignity—to conduct controversy with ability and courtesy—and to make strangers, and especially Englishmen (who, to their credit and not to their

* Colonel Benton's Letter, June 7, 1856.

shame be it spoken, are always watching and promoting English interests all the world over), to make them understand that American interests are dear to American statesmen, and will at all hazards, or at any sacrifice, be maintained;—these were the duties and this the success of our Pennsylvania statesman during the three years he has, with so much honor to himself and us, represented this nation abroad.

Nor is this all—four years of Mr. BUCHANAN'S life, from 1844 to 1848, were passed as the chief adviser of an executive administration, during a period of hostile diplomatic controversy with more nations than one, and at last of actual war. He was Secretary of State during that brief but perilous conflict with Mexico, which severely tried the spirit of the Nation and settled forever the doubt whether a Republic could wage a war in a distant country. The war was waged and the victory was won. The great executive trial was withstood. The flag of the Union was carried by our gallant soldiers to the centre of an enemy's country. It was magnanimously withdrawn when the victory was won—and it is part of Mr. BUCHANAN'S fame, one of the elements of strength he now has at home and abroad, that he was one of that Cabinet which carried the war to its wonderful result.

Who then gives better assurance for peace than he does? Who could more safely administer the Government in the trial of war, should Providence in its inscrutable wisdom thus afflict us?

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE.

Thus then stands, in these leading relations, the question before the people of the United States. There is one other, though lower point of view in which it must be regarded. It is a painful and degrading one. Still it must be recalled.

Sixty years ago, in the month of January, 1793, GEORGE WASHINGTON wrote these memorable words:

"We have abundant reason to rejoice that in this land the light of truth and reason has triumphed over the power of bigotry and superstition, and that every person may here worship God according to the dictates of his own heart. In this enlightened age and in the land of equal liberty, it is our boast that a man's religious tenets will not forfeit the protection of the laws, nor deprive him of the right of attaining and holding the highest offices in the United States."

On the 16th June, 1856, JAMES BUCHANAN said to the people of the United States words not unlike those of WASHINGTON:

"I cordially concur in the sentiments expressed by the Convention on the subject of civil and religious liberty. No party founded on religious or political intolerance towards one class of

American citizens, whether born in our own or in a foreign land, can long continue to exist in this country. We are all equal before God and the Constitution; and the dark spirit of despotism and bigotry which would create odious distinctions among our fellow-citizens, will be speedily rebuked by a free and enlightened public opinion."

And we may well pause and ask why in this day of toleration and intelligence, it is necessary for a public man thus to speak. Why, have Washington's words of warning against religious intolerance gained new significance?

The answer, humiliating as it is, is at hand. Less than two years ago, there sprang up in darkness and secrecy—literally the growth of night—a political organization banded together by fearful and dishonest obligations, having two leading objects,—the political and social proscription of naturalized citizens and of the professors of one form of religious belief. It had for a time an ominous success. It seduced into its ranks many an honest and misguided man who saw not the path designing men were tempting him to tread. It had its attractions in mystery and mummery. It made its appeals to the worst passions of humanity, those endurating influences which have hardened the persecutor's heart in every age. The leading idea of its discipline was disingenuous evasion. It was the only party ever known whose fidelity was falsehood. Still, it grew, and strengthened, and, in its mystery and its intolerance, became one of the political parties of the country. It usurped a sacred name "American," just as "Abolitionism" tries to wear the uniform of "Republicanism." But the moment of its apparent triumph was that of its discomfiture, for, as soon as it abandoned its secresy and renounced the sectarian sentiment, it withered and perished. So low did it sink, so fallen did it become, that its candidates have been thrust aside, and, when its principles were hinted at in the Convention, which now seeks to raise Republicanism on its ruins, it was derided and insulted. Nay, further, as if to degrade this once powerful organization still more, the leaders of the sectional agitation movement—those, who, in Convention, at first faintly cajoled the accredited Americans, are now indirectly trying to court the very voters, who, a year ago, were persecuted and proscribed. Mark the words in which a leading Republican appeals to the emigrant from other lands. Mark the enormity, with which he compares our Southern brethren, one and all, to the butchers and despots of Austria and Italy.

"Our Declaration (of Abolition) appeals to the foreign born, who, rejoicing in the privileges of American citizens, will not hesitate to join in this holy endeavour to vindicate them against the aggressions of an oligarchy worse than any tyranny from

which they have fled. In this contest there is every motive to union, and also every motive to exertion. 'Now or never, now and forever!' Such was the ancient war cry which, embroidered on the Irish flag, streamed from the Castle of Dublin and resounded through the whole island, arousing a generous people to a new struggle for their ancient rights; and this war cry may be fitly inscribed on our standard now. Arise now, or our inexorable slave-driving tyranny will be fastened upon you; arise now, and liberty will be secured forever."*

Is it possible that this is an American citizen speaking of his own country and his own countrymen? Is it conceivable that "Americans" can forgive such insults? Who can imagine that the naturalized or Catholic citizen can be misled by an appeal so disingenuous and indecent?

The Democratic party and their candidate profess no newborn zeal for religious freedom and equality of rights. They stand where they have always stood, and stand there more proudly now, surrounded and supported by gallant and honorable men of other parties who were glad to join them on the great platform which Washington helped to build, and which rests on the granite of the Constitution.

Hence it is, that JAMES BUCHANAN utters, on this vital topic, with new emphasis, the precepts and almost the words of Washington.

THE PENNSYLVANIA SPIRIT.

These are the national aspects in which the question of the next Presidency is submitted to the people. There is one other view, more narrow, but still very impressive, which must be taken of it.

It is a Pennsylvania nomination, and as such is commended to Pennsylvanians. To them the appeal is directly made. Why should the local sentiment be disowned? Why should it not be stimulated?

When, on his return from England, Mr. Buchanan was welcomed back by his fellow-citizens of Maryland, he told them that, at the outset of his professional life, he had once thought of removing and living in Baltimore; but early association, love for the soil which gave him birth, the memory of childhood,—all those ties which, operating on generous and patriotic hearts, bind us to our birth-place, were too powerful. He could not, and he did not desert Pennsylvania. Nor will Pennsylvania now withhold her support from him.

The old Thirteen States,—of which Pennsylvania was the central and controlling one,—have given birth to twelve Presidents

* Letter of the Hon. Charles Sumner on Fremont's nomination.

of the United States (Virginia, six; Massachusetts, two; North Carolina, two; New York and New Hampshire each one); and yet never till now has a nomination been made from Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania by her vote has decided every Presidential election, yet her claims have never been regarded. She has yielded, and been postponed, and no voice of murmur or complaint has ever escaped her lips. Her fidelity to the Constitution and the Union,—her deference to national duty,—her submission to national policy, has been manifested at all times, and in every crisis. Her loyalty to a common country was proved long ago amid the trials of the Revolution; and justice, slow but sure, is now done to her patriots of that day. "Pennsylvania," wrote Washington in the darkest hour of the war, "Pennsylvania is our chief dependence;" and our commonwealth did not fail him. It was on her shoulder, and not on that of Massachusetts and Virginia (as has been claimed) that the hand of Washington rested most heavily in hours of the greatest gloom and perplexity. When, in March, 1780, she abolished slavery within her limits, as she had a right to do, it was done temperately, delicately, and with tender regard for the rights of others bound at least in social union with her. As has been well said by one of her own historians, "No Southern State, no Southern statesman complained of her example. Obtrusive fanaticism had not then alienated the sympathies of our Southern brethren. The Pennsylvania statesmen of the Revolution thought and acted in their treatment of this perilous subject on principles of moderate and practical wisdom. Abolition was with them no wayward freak of headlong enthusiasm." What a profanation of history it is, to compare the temperate, loyal spirit which then reigned in Pennsylvania with the vituperative disloyalty of our times! It is quite as unjust as to call sectarian intolerance and proscription "Americanism," or to dignify abolitionists as republicans.

When the Constitution of the United States was formed, the first State which adopted it was our neighbor Delaware, the next Pennsylvania, and the third New Jersey. The three middle states of the Old Thirteen, then as ever, were quickest in their loyalty. And they have been steadfast ever since. In 1819, the Legislature of Pennsylvania instructed its representatives to support the Missouri restriction; but when Congress, reflecting the popular feeling throughout the land, decided adversely, Pennsylvania acquiesced, and welcomed Missouri cordially as she chose to come,—with or without slavery, as her people determined for themselves,—into the family of States. No Pennsylvania Legislature ever approved the Missouri compromise. When, in 1847, designing and excited men,—the very same who now are fomenting sectional excitement again,—tore down part of the fabric of legislation, which our ancestors erected sixty-seven

years before, and sought to declare a paltering, timid war against the United States, by denying facilities to its officers, the sober loyalty of the people revolted, and the Democracy of Pennsylvania never rested till this vexatious statute was abrogated. Governor Johnston's defeat in 1851 was mainly attributable to his adherence to this reprobated legislation; and now, let it be observed, his reward is, being a Pennsylvanian, to be scornfully repudiated and disowned by the very men and the very party which led him into error. The Democracy on this and on kindred subjects, in its loyalty to the Union and the Constitution, has known no shadow of turning.

And now that, thus national in its feelings, a national man of her own, like Mr. Buchanan, is put forward for the first office in the people's gift, who shall say that an appeal to the state pride of Pennsylvania will be vain? It has been truly said by a loyal Pennsylvanian:

"Local exultation in honors rendered to our own public men, is not an illusory sentiment. No one will think the worse of us for indulging it. It is that which has made Virginia the mother of Presidents. She nurses her children like a loving mother, and does not bind them out or cast them off without care as to what becomes of them. It was that which made Massachusetts cling to Mr. Webster; North Carolina to William Gaston, one who, according to the new standard of politico-religious intolerance, was not fit to be trusted in public office; and South Carolina to Mr. Calhoun; and which bound Kentucky, by devotion that never abated, to Mr. Clay. And now, when, for the first time for seventy years, a Pennsylvania Statesman is named for the highest honor in the Nation's gift, have we not a right, nay, is it not our duty to avow the throbbing of the same sentiment in our hearts? If the habit of easy self-sacrifice, the readiness to be content with small honors and subordinate offices, which has been so long the discredit and shame of Pennsylvania, if all this have not chilled to absolute indifference every natural emotion of honest pride in our bosom, this commonwealth will speak out now in tones which will not soon die away to silence."

Nor is this all,—and we regret to take a still narrower view of the subject,—as a matter of fair State competition, what would the interests of Pennsylvania gain by sustaining a candidate selected as John C. Fremont was, even aside from sectional feelings? The main influences which sustained him then, and which sustain him now, are Northern fanaticism and the wild spirit of speculative adventure, stimulated by the satanic and fanatic Press (those which have been well described as "the percussion presses of the country"),—the organs, by mutual crimination and confession, of venality and fanaticism. The nomination of Fremont was a victory over Pennsylvania. The power of speculative wealth,—the

sympathy of operators in distant land scrip, puffed up to-day and depressed to-morrow, swayed the convention which made this nomination, and even there the Pennsylvania spirit was trampled down with insult.

This is not rhetoric—not declamation—but simple and precise truth. It is a fact which cannot be controverted, that this nomination is, at least partly, due to the speculative sympathy we have spoken of—in mines, and land scrip, and the worst of credit—and that if successful under such auspices, it would inaugurate a new era of commercial adventure and latitudinarian administration, such as no rational or conservative man can fail to deplore.

What can Pennsylvania—her moderate hard-working men—her modest but substantial enterprises—her farmers and miners and mechanics,—what can the merchants and traders of Philadelphia and Pittsburg, those who have contributed so many millions to our local improvements, gain from an ascendency like this?

It is their interest, then, as well as their duty, to support a statesman whose whole life and every thought is devoted to Pennsylvania, and no one out of Pennsylvania will think the worse of him for this. "The older I grow," said Mr. Buchanan, once, in his place in the Senate, "the more am I inclined to be a State Rights man."

Pennsylvania, surely, will thank him for this.

Such is the question which the American people must decide. If any fact has been here stated which history does not record, let it be disproved. If any inference has been drawn which fair reasoning does not authorize, let it be pointed out. The truth has been sought for anxiously and conscientiously. The issues for good or for evil are most momentous, and cannot be avoided or concealed in any spurious excitement which may be attempted. The election of a sectional President by a strictly geographical vote can lead to but one result,—the practical breaking down of the Executive Department of the Government, or a dissolution of the Union. And who, in his sober meditations, can decide which is the most fearful. It is no idle fear—no rhetorical prophecy of evil—but the statement of a certain result.

May these "Words of Counsel," written by no alarmist, but by a temperate and reasoning student of his country's history,—by one who has been taught from early boyhood to reverence as his highest social law the Constitution of the Union, and never believed before, that, in defiance of Washington's farewell and solemn words, sectional and geographical parties would divide this country and endanger the Union. May these words of friendly and earnest counsel, addressed to reasoning men, help to avert these sad results!

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 011 898 283 6

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 011 898 283 6